Regional Centre for Education and Training of Bio-Technology

2218. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has signed an MoU with UNESCO for setting up a Regional Centre for Education and Training of bio-technology;

(b) if so, the main features of the agreement;

(c) whether the regional centre would be the first of its kind with a networked education system apart from conducting research activities and training of scientists;

(d) whether activities in this centre would be funded by India and other member countries in Asian region; and

(e) by when the Centre would be functional?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, an Agreement has been signed between UNESCO and Government of India on 14th July 2006 towards the establishment of a Regional Centre for Biotechnology Training and Education in India. The main features of the agreement are as follows:

The Regional Centre shall be an autonomous institution under the aegis of UNESCO to render service to the Member States, which desire to co-operate in the field of biotechnology by virtue of their geographical proximity and common interest in the objectives.

The Prime objective of the centre shall be to promote capacity building through education, training and inter-disciplinary research and development in the area of biotechnology for sustainable development through regional and international collaborations.

The other objectives shall include facilitation for transfer of knowledge and technology, to create a hub of biotechnology expertise, and to address human resource needs in this region, to create network of Satellite Centres in this region and to improve South—South Cooperation.

The agreement lists the functions of the Centre to realize its objectives, defines the organization structure for Governance of the Centre; financial arrangements, legal status, privileges and immunities of the Centre.

(c) Yes, the Regional Centre will be the first of its kind in the region with a networked inter-disciplinary education system linking engineering, medicine and biology as related to biotechnology. A functional research milieu is a key for excellence in education, therefore research activities and training of scientists and of Ph. D scholars will be an integral part of education in biotechnology.

(d) The Regional Centre's initial resources shall derive from catalytic funds allotted by the Government of India; and for start-up activities, by the UNESCO, as well as such contributions as it may receive from other Member States of UNESCO within this region for the establishment of a core fund. The Government of India shall provide appropriate office space, equipment and facilities, salaries of staff, costs of utilities, maintenance, expenses for studies, training, publication activities, holding meetings of the Board of Governors etc. Apart from catalytic support for start-up activities of the Centre, the UNESCO shall provide funds for concrete activities/projects of the Centre, if these are in line with UNESCO: programme priorities and also provide linkages. The Centre will encourage international government and non-governmental financial entities, as well as Member states of the UNESCO to provide financial and technical assistance.

(e) The permanent office and other facilities of the Centre are likely to be set up within a period of 3 years from the start of construction. In the interim, it is proposed to start its activities through hired premises within one year of the financial sanction of the Centre's budget.

Inventions by Scientists

†2219. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts being made by Government to promtoe commercial use of new inventions by scientists and to check brain-drain from the country;

(b) whether Government are formulating a scheme to ensure royalty on commercial use of inventions by the scientists; and

(c) if so, by when the said scheme would be introduced?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.